

#pages 3**Date:** July 27, 2007**To:** Ravalli County Commissioners (375-6507)**From:** Linda A. Cardenas**Subject:** Comments on Ravalli County Proposal to Reopen Lost Horse Creek Quarry**Message:****Dear Commissioners:**

Please find attached a courtesy copy of the comments I submitted to the Darby District Ranger regarding the subject proposal. I am confident that you will carefully consider all the ramifications of your decision, especially weighing the current and future impacts to: (1) County road infrastructure; (2) economic growth/viability; and, particularly, (3) the negative impact to taxpayers' pocketbooks if you do not take advantage of the Lost Horse Creek quarry opportunities.

If you have any questions, or need further clarification, I can be reached at 406.207.1745 (cell) or 406.777.0716 (home).

Thank you for your time and consideration and the opportunity to provide comments on this very important decision.

Sincerely,


Linda A. Cardenas**RECEIVED**JUL ²⁶ 6-5 2007

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Chuck Oliver
District Ranger
USFS Darby Ranger Station
PO Box 388
Darby, MT 59829

Subject: Lost Horse Creek Quarry

July 27, 2007

Dear Mr. Oliver:

I am writing to express my **support** for Ravalli County's proposal to reopen the Lost Horse Creek quarry for mining operations. I live in Ravalli County and my family and I frequent the Lost Horse Creek area for horseback riding, fishing, and family outings.

I believe that the County should be allowed to mine gravel from the existing quarry at Lost Horse Creek due to the following reasons:

- 1) Ravalli County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Montana. Demand for affordable, high-quality, gravel will continue to increase as new roads are built and maintained. The County has an overriding interest in providing cost-effective, quality road construction and maintenance services to the general public and county taxpayers. The benefits to the public of reopening the quarry clearly far outweigh the benefits enjoyed by a much smaller, elite, group of recreational climbers utilizing the immediate vicinity of the quarry.
- 2) Alternative, cost-comparable gravel resources are not readily available to County taxpayers. This quarry would provide unique and substantial economic benefits to the public (estimated cost to the county is \$7- \$10/ton versus \$14/ton from other sources, Ravalli Republic article, July 26, 2007).
- 3) Alternative recreational sites abound in the Bitterroot Valley.
- 4) The quarry is an **existing** land use, superseding today's levels of recreational rock climbing. As an already-established prior beneficial public land use, mining of mineral resources should be considered as having precedence, and not totally excluded due to new recreational demands of the quarry site.
- 5) Residents who choose to live near public lands are responsible for knowing the ramifications of associated public resource use/management on their chosen lifestyle.
- 6) The Forest Service should be able to design mitigative measures that would make competing uses of the quarry resources safe, feasible, and beneficial to multiple public interests.

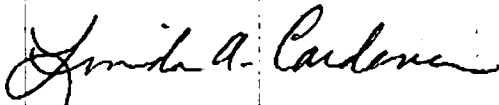
Although climbers may not find quarry operations aesthetically pleasing, they should be able to compromise and put up with temporary periods of increased noise and traffic operations during the low recreational use period (late fall—early spring). I would assume that during the mining operational period, most recreational use of this area would occur mainly on the weekends, and I am not sure if the County proposal includes weekend operations or not. Perhaps, this could be another impact mitigation opportunity; as well as, looking at possibly adjusting the operational start-up/end dates by a week or two to further accommodate recreational use during favorable weather patterns.

This is a classic example of the challenges related to multiple-use resource management. De-conflicting uses and developing reasonable compromises is what federal land management is all about. I am confident that the Forest Service will find a way to successfully accommodate these competing uses.

Therefore, I am strongly recommending that you allow the people of Ravalli County the opportunity to utilize the economically-vital mineral resources of Lost Horse Creek quarry to cost-effectively build and maintain our current and future road systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important decision.

Sincerely,



Linda A. Cardenas
1127 Lance Lane
Stevensville, MT 59870
406.777.0716

cc: Ravalli County Commissioners (fax copy)